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SALEROOMS.

SECOND AND CONCLUDING ARTICLE.

IN mature years, we have got into the habit of frequenting a saleroom of a more fashionable kind than those described in the preceding paper—one also, let us whisper, much more fatal to our financial tranquillity—and yet it is questionable, after all, if we do not profit as much in observation of what is going on at the place, as we suffer from the temptations to which we are exposed to bid for things of which we have no pressing need. This room is one almost exclusively devoted to the vendition of the libraries of "gentlemen deceased" or of "gentlemen gone abroad"—as also of their stocks of wines, plate, pictures, and articles of curiosity. It is situated in a fashionable thoroughfare, and is always sure to command a company of the first respectability.

The sales take place here before dinner, which in itself renders them very different affairs from the "auctions" of our old friend Cairns. The lamplight of ancient Peter's den gave one's attendance there a free and easy incognito character: you turned in for the evening, and cared not who you mixed with. The garish eye of day takes away from both the romance and the ease of a saleroom. Every thing, your own feelings inclusive, is then too defined. You know too well what you are about. Your competitors are all exposed in their broadest lineaments before you—no chance of some lurking enemy hurling a bid against you, like Nisus, from some dark corner of the room, and then disclosing himself at the clerk's desk in the unexpected form of lumpish bricklayer or tiny shop-boy, and making you feel half ashamed at being foiled by such a foe. The difference is that between the excitement of guerrilla warfare and the tameness of scientific operations in the open field. The fineness of the books, too, is distressing; if one be now possessed of more spare cash, so also are the books much more valuable; so that, like King James in Whitehall, casting back regretful thoughts to the days when he could scarcely keep house in Scotland, one feels inclined to wish for those times once more, when temperance judiciously laid out at Peter's would keep him in fresh reading for a fortnight. The company assembled at Mr Tait's—for his is the room in our eye—is usually composed of persons both able and willing to go to the value of the books. Many of them are gentlemen belonging to the learned professions; others are young men of studious tendencies; others are booksellers inclined to snap up whatever may be going at such a price as to allow of its being sold over again at a profit. There is also a plucky generation of old gentlemen of ample means, who, though already possessed of more books than they would be able to read in three lives, chuse to bid for every thing that strikes their fancy, if it only be a various edition of some book of which they have already half a dozen copies of various degrees of tallness. It is rarely, therefore, that books are to be obtained here as bargains, as formerly they were to be had at Mr Cairns's or Mr Carfrae's. Yet somehow there is a fascination to some minds in the idea of a sale of books. Let but books be any where exposed to view, and these people are as irresistibly drawn to them as the vultures to a field of the slain. Once there, it is easy to form attachments. The bidding begins. A wish to possess and a fear to lose, seize the mind; a feeling of contention rises; and, thus animated, it is the most natural thing in the world to go beyond the value of the article. At auctions, indeed, one may be said to woo and wed books by a Sabine mode; there is not time either to estimate beauties or detect defects, and one is in a great measure compelled just to take the mistress that comes readiest in the struggle.

Though only what might be expected, it is not unworthy of being remarked, in regard to this saleroom, how certain every particular kind of articles—books, pictures, wines, or whatever it be—is to attract, for that day, an appropriate company. It is by no means fanciful to say that one might know it to be a book day by the paleness, and a wine day by the redness, of the company. Mr Tait's congregation seems to take its hue, as the chameleon was supposed to do, from the objects with which they are most in contact. It is no more than a statistical fact, ascertained by exact observation, that not above two or three persons are ever seen at sales of both of these kinds. It must either be that scarcely any man is devoted to both wine and letters; or that scarcely any man who is extravagant in one way, has either the inclination or the means to be extravagant in another. There are even classes of books which are sure to bring forth particular kinds of company. A day of theology or of law is of course as marked as possible, because it brings a professional class. One of old and rare books brings out, from dim garrets and dusty back shops, flocks of elderly men, who look as if unaccustomed to daylight, and whose very clothes seem to have a scent of ancient vellum and musty paper. A day rich in history is sure to call forth a few persons of that peculiar taste who are seldom seen at any other time; and a tolerable lot of books in such departments as mathematics, or natural philosophy, is apt to evoke certain personages still more strange to the scene. A habitual attender traces in these things the great natural principle which makes every creature follow the line of its faculties. He sees in it the same universal law which makes the various lower animals, let loose upon the great common of nature, select each its proper food, and delight in its proper element. It is by virtue of this law that all men are seen in the world liable to appear in transactions suited to their nature, the troublers where there is trouble, the peace-makers where there is a call for peace. Thus some men in public bodies have so stamped the impression of their character on the public mind, that, if an opportunity should occur for either putting in a word of gentleness, or acting a harsh and malignant part which other men would shrink from, it is possible to say before hand who is the man that will appear in either of these capacities.

The above remarks refer to what may be called the natural attenders on sales. There are two other classes of persons, who are often observed in the room, without any regard to the particular articles exposed, but who evidently are only to be considered, like Mr Selwyn at the French execution, as gentlemen amateurs, seeing that they never buy any thing. The principle of these people is simply a liking to attend auctions. One class of them is composed of persons considerably advanced in life, and of good appearance—old gentlemen who pop about—who always come in a respectable way, a day or two before-hand, and secure a catalogue, as if they felt very greatly concerned in the sale, and intended, if they should not buy much themselves, at least to speak a great deal of it to their friends. In the forenoon, before the sale commences, they may be observed in the room, taking a careful and most connoisseur-like survey of the books, and excessively ready to fall a-talking with any body about the merits of any particular member of the lot. They are always perfectly acquainted with the story about the proprietor of the books, and the reasons for their being brought to the hammer, and usually contrive to get the thing fully explained to six or eight persons before Mr Tait ascends the rostrum. Just before the time for that event, they are observed to take up a

position—some seat which they know from old experience to be comfortable, and where they can see all the books handed up and down, and hear all the bids. There, catalogue in hand, and spectacle on nose, they look as much concerned in what is going on, as if they intended to buy half the goods in the room. They are most particular in pencilling down the prices at the ends of the lines in their catalogue, though sometimes a good deal puzzled to make such a sum as eleven guineas and a half into plain sterling denominations. They manifest great anxiety to prevent Mr Tait from overlooking any modest bid that may have been dropped in their vicinity at the moment when the hammer fell, evidently feeling as ticklishly as if the case were their own. When any other mistake occurs, as, for instance, in reference to the number of volumes of any book, their volunteer zeal leads them to set the orator right, whispering the thing in a confidential sort of way, as if they did not wish to attract more than enough of public attention to the error. They are also sure to give a very decisive opinion if there should be any dispute as to a too late bid—and yet not a loudly expressed opinion, more looked in fact than spoken; though, if it be ultimately held a case of "in time," when the old gentleman thinks otherwise, he is heard assuring himself most vehemently, under his breath, that the thing has not gone according to justice. The other class of non-buying sale-attenders are a set of poor fellows, in faded cloaks or shabby surtouts, who, in the modesty of pennilessness, do not attempt to mingle in the company around the table, and never once put hand upon book, but merely hover on the outskirts of the crowd, gazing towards the salesman, content to behold the distant forms of books, and to catch up the faint echoes of their prices. Often have we meditated on one of these poor men, not without some compunctious emotions. Perhaps he has known the day when he could buy books like his neighbours, and make use of them too; he might even have had dreams of learned celebrity; his talents and acquirements may have been the pride and the hope of a father, or of some other kindly judging relatives. But chill penury repressed his aspirations; and now, a poor bankrupt in means and in mind, he can only follow a sort of instinct, which has survived many other early feelings, and by virtue of which he feels himself almost unconsciously drawn into the presence of books. He has so long been unable to buy, that he has ceased even to wish for the possession of any of those literary treasures; but still it is something even to see them, to hear their names proclaimed, and to witness the happiness of more fortunate students who can afford to purchase them. Alas for the caprice of fortune: the duplicates, alone, of one of the wealthy old gentlemen formerly alluded to, would set up this stricken deer in all the library that he ever longed for. 'Twould be banqueting to him to have but the crumbs that fall from the rich man's table.

Of all peculiar companies collected at particular kinds of sales, that collected at a wine sale is apt to be the most peculiar—that is to say, the least composed of any admixture of the individuals who attend other sales. People appear in the room that day who have not been seen in it since the last affair of the same kind, and will not be seen in it again till the next. Some of them wear the proper insignia in front, and have a curious way of bringing up one foot after another; but, upon the whole, there is less of the external symptoms which are understood to mark a love of good wine, than might be expected. Most of them, however, appear as men in affluent circumstances, country gentlemen, retired merchants,

and others, the one peculiarity of *elderliness* being almost universal. A wine sale is almost a merry-making in itself. Samples of every kind offered for sale are handed about, followed by salvers of biscuits and cheese; and though the most of those who sip, do so with an air of most connoisseur-like solemnity, compressing the lips, and seeming as if too much abstracted in mental criticism to be conscious of enjoying the liquor, still it seems far from unlikely that to many it is secretly a source of alimentary gratification. Indeed, such is the appearance of things about the middle of a good wine sale, that an imagination of tolerable liveliness can scarcely help regarding the whole affair as a large dinner party. Mr Tait acting as president with his hammer, while the bidding passes for something of the nature of conversation. Towards the conclusion, there is a recklessness in the bidding of some of the old gentlemen, that shows how things are going with them. About that time it is not uncommon for them to bid for pints in the supposition of quarts, and to make sundry grievous mistakes as to the authority of the wine-merchants quoted on the corks. Complaints are also very general during the week after the sale, as to the wine which has been sent home. They cannot be induced to believe that *this* was the wine which they bought; it is not nearly so good; and they are apt to go away grumbling at the jugglery which has been practised on them. Yet, let but another wine sale be advertised, and there are all the same rosy old gentlemen planted beside the table, as eager to sip and bid as ever.

It has often occurred to us that there is a great sermon power in sales. In one point of view, Messrs Robins, Evans, Sotheby, Tait, &c. might be considered as preachers. When we see "the library of a gentleman deceased" exposed in this manner to the public, how forcibly are we reminded of the transitoriness of all earthly possessions! Here are the books which, but two months ago, were the endeared property of a fellow-being, as healthy perhaps as ourselves; here is his book-plate on every volume, here are pencil notes which he made on their margins—the very binding and other external peculiarities remind us of him, because they are significant of his peculiar taste. And now these books, which so lately formed a private circle of confidential friends around this man, are brought forth into a public place, to be handled, inspected, and estimated as so much mere property, by every body who has the least curiosity about them. The case is perhaps even more impressive, when the late proprietor is only bankrupt—when he still lives, but has been bereft, in the vicissitudes of mortal affairs, of this faithful multitude of silent councillors. When, instead of books, we find the sale to consist of pictures and other articles of household ornament, we are apt to be even more deeply moved. There was lately sold at Mr Tait's the whole of the ornamental articles which had belonged to a Scottish noble family, whose title has been for some years extinct; and a more striking scene we have rarely witnessed. The heir of this family had squandered, in a surprisingly short space of time, the whole of his fortune, including not only the property of his noble progenitors, but a paternal estate of still greater amount. All the land that was saleable had already been sold, and now his creditors had laid their hands upon the family pictures and articles of virtue, determined not to lose even the trifle which these were likely to bring. Now then were seen exhibited at Mr Tait's all the faces that had shone from the ancestral walls for centuries. Ancient warriors were there, in armour—venerable judges, prelates, and senators, in their robes—honest bluff-looking figures in the handsome dresses of the eighteenth century—and delicate sweet-looking female busts, in the style which Lely made so common. Not only were all the representatives and immediate connections of the family there, but also personages of various kinds of distinction with whom the family were historically associated. There, for instance, was Charles I., who was so much the friend of the Lord — of that day, as to charge his attendants on the scaffold to send to his lordship the cap he then wore on his head, "as a remembrance." There also were portraits of various sovereigns of Europe, which had been presented to a later representative, of diplomatic celebrity. There hung the noble Maria Theresa, the vigorous but profligate Catherine, and the brutal Paul: how little could they have recked that they were in after years to be exhibited in a sale-room, and "disposed of" for little more than the value of their coronated frames! A state-bed, of purple vel-

vet and gold, which had been a present from Catherine to "the ambassador;" a magnificent jewelled sword, which some other obliged prince had buckled to his side; and many other splendid things, such as princes may give, and nobles receive; were there, making the room absolutely rich with pomp. The time had been when these things were preserved, cherished, and displayed, as memorials of family glory; successive generations would be trained to venerate them, and it would be privileged strangers only who were admitted to the happiness of beholding them. But now the eyes which once glowed over them with a not unallowable pride, were dim: the sentiment which once hung around them like a halo, had passed from them; and they had become common curiosities, appreciated only for odd peculiarities in their manufacture, or the value of the stuff of which they consisted. Alas, what are all the efforts of human beings to make themselves be thought superior to their fellow-creatures! But it was not family pride alone which was here shown disappointed of its aims. There were gentler feelings here seen defeated. Not all the portraits had been painted with the design of commemorating lordly features, for the admiration of posterity, and the support of ancestral dignity. There were infants there, who could only have been painted from an emotion of parental fondness, wishing to save at least a beloved image from the grave—beautiful fair-haired girls, whose faces the same feeling had wished to fix in everlasting bloom—and little merry boys who had been painted at their sports, because those who loved them felt that they never could be represented in a happier condition. These young creatures had long since passed into the house of forgetfulness, either in their youth or in advanced age: they, and all who once looked kindly on them, were for ever gone. But here still stood the irrefragable evidence that they had once been the objects of an affection which not even the pomps of rank could stifle. In contemplating such things, as, one after another, they were brought up for sale, and knocked down for small sums to persons who had no feeling whatever respecting the persons represented, it was impossible to restrain a bitter feeling respecting the unhappy prodigal who had been the means of exposing his own flesh and blood to such an indignity. And yet it might be with no good will on his part that the glories of his house were thus brought to disgrace. It is just one of the saddest results of reckless expenditure, that it brings its victim into situations in which his own best feelings, and those of his friends, are outraged, and himself compelled to stand by, and hear, without resentment, his name become a sound of scorn and obloquy.

WONDERFUL CURERS.

WONDERFUL cures were abundant in the days of antiquity. It is probable that *Esculapius* himself, if any such person ever existed, was chiefly, if not solely, one who performed cures by working on the imagination of his patients. The numerous and noted body of priests who ministered in his temples in ancient Greece and Italy, were unquestionably healers of this order. Amulets, consisting of precious stones or certain plants, worn on the body; charms in the form of words, prayers, and music; and the practice of magical rites; were all of them familiar modes of cure among the ancients, and continued to be so among many of the most advanced modern nations till a recent period. Indeed, the separation of genuine medicine from superstitious practices, is, even in England, a comparatively modern event; that is to say, amongst the learned, for the more ignorant people of all ranks yet put trust in quack medicines. There seems a good reason for this: Medicine is exactly one of those sciences in which the relation of cause and effect is of the sufficient degree of obscurity to call for the exercise of our sense of wonder.* To the great mass of mankind, the change produced in a diseased body by the natural operation of a chemical substance, vegetable or mineral, must appear nearly as wonderful as the supposition that three unintelligible words pronounced over it will effect a cure. They do not trace the steps of the process in the one case more than the other; and it is an inability to trace these steps, as Dr Smith has clearly shown,† which produces the sentiment of wonder. Accordingly, pretensions to miraculous curing have been at all times a ready means of imposing upon mankind.

Till the early part of the eighteenth century, it was the custom of at least the sovereigns of Great Britain, if not for several other European monarchs, to go

* It is precisely the same obscurity which gives rise to the notable heart-burnings and jealousies of the medical profession. The effects of medical treatment are of a loose and uncertain nature. Much of the reputation of a physician must necessarily depend, not on a computation of exact results, but a vague faith in his skill. Hence ticklishness about reputation, and great anger when the reverse of faith is shown. Mathematicians, on the other hand, from the absolute certainty of their speculations, have no room for quarrelling.

† History of Astronomy, Works of Dr Adam Smith, v. 72.

periodically through the ceremony of touching for the king's evil or scrofula. It was supposed that a real sovereign—that is, one possessing a full hereditary title, or, in other words, reigning by divine right—was able to cure a person afflicted with that disease, by a mere touch of his hand. In England, the ceremony had been in vogue for many centuries. It was generally supposed to have been first practised by Edward the Confessor; and there is good evidence that it was in use in the thirteenth century. In the fifteenth, during the reign of Edward IV., we find the learned legal writer, Sir John Fortescue, speaking of the gift of healing as a privilege which had from time immemorial belonged to the kings of England: he attributes the virtue to the unction imparted to their hands at the coronation. Even the powerful mind of Elizabeth was not superior to this superstition, and she frequently came before her people in the character of a miraculous healer. There was a regular office in the English Book of Common Prayer, for the performance of the ceremony. The persons desirous of being cured appear to have been introduced by a bishop or other high dignitary of the church. Prayers were said, and every effort made to produce in the patients a firm reliance on the power of the Deity as about to be manifested through the royal hand. At the moment of imposing the hand, the king said, "I touch, but God healeth," and afterwards hung a coin round the patient's neck, which he was to wear for the remainder of his life. The Stuarts, from their extreme notions of divine right, and the weak and superstitious character of the most of them, were great sticklers for this part of their royal prerogative, and frequently put it to use. Dr Johnson had an indistinct recollection of being touched when a child by Queen Anne. The old Jacobites, however, used to say that the virtue did not descend to Mary, William, and Anne, seeing that they wanted the divine right. Still less would they believe that it resided in the sovereigns of the Brunswick dynasty, who, however, never put it to the proof. Since the death of Anne, there have been, we believe, no touchings for the evil; and the office for the ceremony has been silently allowed to drop out of the Prayer-Book.

The Jacobites, while believing the Georges to be incapable of healing, were not disinclined to the notion that the Pretender possessed the gift. The laborious Carte brought disgrace upon his History of England by introducing, in a note, an account of one Christopher Lovel, a labouring man of Bristol, who, being grievously afflicted with king's evil, which appeared in five great sores on his neck, breast, and arms, proceeded in August 1716 to Avignon, and was there touched by the exiled prince. "The usual effect," he says, "followed. From the moment that the man was touched, and invested with the narrow ribband, to which a small piece of silver was pendant, according to the rites prescribed in the office appointed by the church for that solemnity, the humour dispersed insensibly, his sores healed up, and he recovered strength daily, till he arrived in perfect health, in the beginning of January following, at Bristol." Carte tells us that he himself saw the man soon after, and found him in a rigorous frame of body, with no appearance of the disease but the red scars which it had left; and he evidently must have been of opinion that the cure was the effect of a miraculous virtue in the Pretender's hand. A writer of the day, in commenting upon this passage in Mr Carte's book, takes a sensible view of the case. He attributes the cure to the exercise of the journey, the change of air and of food, and to the medical treatment to which, he says, the man was subjected immediately after the touch. And the cure, he says, was, after all, only temporary. After a short time, the sores broke out afresh, and the man perished in a new attempt to reach the court of Avignon.

Carte affected to be puzzled to account for the cure of Lovel, seeing that the royal personage who performed the cure was not an *anointed* king, for the virtue, it was supposed, lay in the unction, as expressed by Sir John Fortescue. It must have been a virtue, we fear, liable to accommodate itself to circumstances, out of deference to the exigencies of royalty. When Prince Charles Stuart was at Holyroodhouse in October 1745, he, although only claiming to be Prince of Wales and Regent, touched a female child for the king's evil, who in twenty-one days became perfectly cured!*

The seventeenth and early part of the eighteenth centuries present us with several examples of private persons, who were supposed to have a miraculous power of curing by touch. The most celebrated was a Mr Valentine Greatrakes, a Protestant gentleman of the county of Waterford, born in 1628—a thoroughly sound Christian and good man, and occupying a highly respectable place in society. I was some time after the Restoration, while acting as clerk of the peace to the county of Cork, that Mr Greatrakes first arrived at a conviction of his possession of healing powers. In an account of himself, which he wrote in 1666, he says, "About four years since, I had an impulse which frequently suggested to me that there was bestowed on me the gift of curing the king's evil, which, for the extraordinaryness thereof, I thought fit to conceal for some time; but at length I told my wife; for, whether sleeping or waking, I had this impulse; but her reply

* An account of this curious transaction is given in the History of the Rebellion of 1745, published in Constable's Miscellany.

was, that it was an idle imagination. But to prove the contrary, one William Maher, of the parish of Lismore, brought his son to my wife, who used to distribute medicines in charity to the neighbours; and my wife came and told me, that I had now an opportunity of trying my impulse, for there was one at hand that had the evil grievously in the eyes, throat, and cheeks; whereupon I laid my hands on the places affected, and prayed to God, for Jesus' sake, to heal him. In a few days afterwards, the father brought his son with the eye so changed, that the eye was almost quite whole; and to be brief (to God's glory I speak it), within a month he was perfectly healed, and so continues."

Another person, still more afflicted, was soon after cured by Mr Greatrakes in the same manner; and he then began to receive "an impulse," suggesting that he could cure other diseases. This he soon had an opportunity of proving, for "there came unto me a poor man, with a violent pain in his loins, that he went almost double, and having also a grievous ulcer in his leg, very black, who desired me, for God's sake, to lay my hands on him; whereupon I put my hands on his loins and flank, and immediately went the pains out of him, so that he was relieved, and could stand upright without trouble; the ulcer also in his leg was healed; so that, in a few days, he returned to his labour as a mason."

He now became extensively known for his gift of healing, and was resorted to by people from greater distances, with the most of whom he was equally successful. Wounds, ulcers, convulsions, and dropsy, were among the maladies which he cured. In an epidemic fever he was also eminently successful, healing all who came to him. So great was the resort to his house, that all the out-houses connected with it were usually filled with patients, and he became so much engaged in the duty of healing them, as to have no time to attend to his own affairs, or to enjoy the society of his family. The clergy of the diocese at length took alarm at his proceedings, and he was cited by the dean of Lismore before the Bishop's Court, by which he was forbidden to exercise his gift for the future—an order which reminds us of the decree of Louis XIV., commanding that no more miracles should be performed at the tomb of the Abbé Paris. Mr Greatrakes, nevertheless, continued to heal as formerly, until his fame reached England. In August 1665, he received a visit from Mr Flamstead, the astronomer, who was afflicted with a constitutional weakness; but he failed in this case. Early in the ensuing year, he went to England for the purpose of curing the Viscountess Conway of an inveterate headache, in which also he failed. But, while residing at Ragley with the Conway family, he cured many hundreds afflicted with various diseases. Lord Conway himself, in a letter to his brother, thus speaks of the healer:—"I must confess, that, before his arrival, I did not believe the tenth part of those things which I have been an eye-witness of; and several others, of as accurate judgment as any in the kingdom, who are come hither out of curiosity, do acknowledge the truth of his operations. This morning the Bishop of Gloucester recommended to me a prebend's son in his diocese, to be brought to him for a leprosy from head to foot, which hath been judged incurable above ten years, and in my chamber he cured him perfectly; that is, from a moist humour, 'twas immediately dried up, and began to fall off; the itching was quite gone, and the heat of it taken away. The youth was transported to admiration. * * After all, I am far from thinking that his cures are at all miraculous. I believe it is by a *sanative virtue* and a *natural efficiency*, which extends not to all diseases, but is much more proper and effectual to some than to others, as he doth also dispatch some with a great deal of ease, and others not without a great deal of pains."

He was now invited by the king to come to London, whither he accordingly proceeded; and as he went along through the country, we are told that the magistrates of cities and towns begged of him that he would come and cure their sick. The king, though not fully persuaded of his wonderful gift, recommended him to the notice of his physicians, and permitted him to do all the good he pleased in London. He went every day to a particular part of the city, where a prodigious number of people, of all ranks, and of both sexes, assembled. The only visible means he took to cure them, was to stroke the parts affected. The gout, rheumatism, and other painful affections, were driven by his touch from one part to another, till he got them expelled at the very extremities of the body, after which the patient was considered as cured. Such phenomena could not fail, in the most superstitious era of our history, to excite great wonder, and attract universal attention. The Cavalier wits and courtiers ridiculed them, as they ridiculed every thing else that appeared serious. St Evremond, then at court, wrote a sarcastic novel on the subject, under the title of the Irish Prophet. Others, including several of the faculty, defended him. It even appears that the Royal Society, unable to refute the facts, were compelled to account for them as produced by "a sanative contagion in Mr Greatrakes's body, which had an antipathy to some particular diseases, and not to others." They also published some of his cures in their Transactions. A severe pamphlet by Dr Lloyd, chaplain of the Charter-House, caused Mr Greatrakes at this time to publish the account of himself which has been already quoted. In it, he says, "Many de-

mand of me why some are cured, and not all. To which question I answer, that God may please to make use of such means, by me, as shall operate according to the dispositions of the patient, and therefore cannot be expected to be alike efficacious in all. They also demand of me why some are cured at once and not all? and why the pains should fly immediately out of some, and take such *ambages* in others? and why it should go out of some at their eyes, and some at their fingers, some at their ears or mouths? To which I say, if all these things could have a plain account given of them, there would be no cause to count them strange. Let them tell me what substance that is which removes and goes out with such expedition, and it will be more easy to resolve their questions. Some will know of me why or how I do pursue some pains from place to place till I have chased them out of the body, by laying my hands on the outside of the clothes only (as is usual), and not all pains? To which I answer, that—and others have been abundantly satisfied that it is so—though I am not able to give a reason, yet I am apt to believe there are some pains which afflict men after the manner of evil spirits, which kind of pains cannot endure my hand, may not my gloves, but fly immediately, though six or eight coats or cloaks be put between the person and my hand, as at the Lady Ranelagh's, at York House in London, as well as in Ireland, has been manifested. Now, another question will arise, whether the operation of my hand proceeds from the temperature of my body, or from a divine gift, or from both. To which I say, that I have reason to believe that there is some extraordinary gift of God." At the end of his narrative are appended a number of certificates as to his cures, signed by the most respectable, pious, and learned persons of the day, amongst whom are the Honourable Robert Boyle, Bishop Rust, Dr Cudworth, Dr Patrick, Dr Whitchot, and Dr Wilkins. In 1667, he returned to Ireland, where he lived for many years, but without sustaining his reputation for curing. It appears, however, that, upon the strictest inquiry, no blemish could ever be found to attach to the character of this extraordinary man. All he did was done in a spirit of pure piety and benevolence. The truth of the impressive words with which he concludes his own narrative was never challenged—"Whether I have done my duty as a Christian, in employing that talent which God had entrusted me withal, to the good of people distressed and afflicted, or no, judge you and every good man. Thus far I appeal to the world, whether I have taken rewards, deluded or deceived any man. All further I will say is, that I pray I may never be weary of well-doing, and that I may be found a faithful servant when I come to give up my last account."

William Read, who lived in the reign of Queen Anne, and had been originally a poor illiterate tailor, acquired a great reputation for a gift of curing blindness and defects in the eye-sight. In time he acquired a fortune, and Queen Anne, who gave him the care of her eyes, thought proper to knight him. A wretched woman named Mapp, of coarse masculine habits, became famous about the year 1736 for a wonderful gift of setting bones; and in 1748, the whole of England rang with the fame of Bridget Bostock of Copenhall, in Cheshire, a poor infirm old creature, who cured multitudes afflicted with all sorts of diseases—at first by merely having the names of patients sent to her, that she might pray for them, but afterwards by rubbing the parts affected by her fasting spittle, and blessing and praying for them on the spot. The latest examples of wonderful cures are those performed by Prince Hohenloe in 1824, by prayers said at a distance of several hundred miles from the afflicted person.

These supposed miraculous cures certainly form a curious chapter in the history of the human mind. How strange to reflect that the belief in the power of the royal touch existed, without so much as being questioned, for the better part of a thousand years, and only came into discredit within the recollection, almost, of people still living! That such impostors as Read, Mapp, and Bostock, should have so recently been able to practise a thriving trade of pretended miraculous healing, also shows how far the public mind, in even the most enlightened countries, is from being in a thoroughly enlightened state. The usual mode of accounting for such pseudo-miracles, by supposing imposture on the one hand, and credulity or the influence of imagination on the other, finds only a somewhat difficult application in the case of Mr Greatrakes. The obviously disinterested character of this man, the extent of his practising, and the attestations which they obtained from some of the most astute persons of his age, make it difficult to suppose either wilful deception or a too easy belief; and yet in what other solution shall we take refuge? We may at least

* Mr Southey, in his *Omniana*, quotes some curious passages respecting Greatrakes, from a contemporary writer, Henry More. It seems to have been More's opinion that there may be a sanative and healing contagion as well as a morbid and venomous. He states that Greatrakes's hand had "a sort of herbous aromatic scent," and that he could also cure by his spittle. More was not surprised by the cures of Greatrakes, having, ten years before, seen "one Coker," who, "by a very gentle chafing or rubbing of his hand," cured diseases, but not so many as Greatrakes, who was successful, he says, in "cancers, scrofulas, deafness, king's evil, headache, epilepsy, fevers (though quartan ones), leprosy, palsy, tympany, lameness, numbness of limbs, stone, convulsions, ptychick, scatica, ulcers, pains of the body, nay blind and dumb in some measure, and I know not but he cured the gout." More, at the same time, states, that "he did not succeed in all his applications, nor were his cures always lasting."

be certain that, if any other solution be ever discovered for these apparent mysteries, it will be a natural one—the operation of some law, possibly, which shows itself rarely, and which may not become a part of ascertained science for several ages to come.

THE RURAL LIFE OF ENGLAND.*

UNDER this title, Mr William Howitt has published a delightful addition to his well-known and extensively popular *Book of the Seasons*. It is externally a very beautiful book, beautifully printed, beautifully boarded (boarding is now an important feature in books), and beautifully embellished with head-pieces and tail-pieces of rural objects of all kinds, engraved in wood by Samuel Williams. The subject is divided into Parts. Under the Life of the Aristocracy we have chapters on the pre-eminence of England as a place of country residence, the sports of the nobility and gentry in the country, planting, gardening, scientific farming, and so forth. Under the Life of the Agricultural Population, we find chapters on the farmers, their servants, the Bondage System of the North of England, and other matters. The Picturesque and Moral Features of the country—Old-English Houses, Out-of-the-way Nooks of the World, Gypsies, &c.—constitute the third part, and complete the first volume. The Second volume contains sections on the causes of the strong attachment of the English to country life, the Forests of England, and the Habits, Amusements, and Condition of the People. The subject is obviously one which should make a very agreeable book, and Mr Howitt, from his long-established habits as a pedestrian wanderer and inquirer, and the sentiment developed in his former work, appears to us exactly the man into whose hands it ought to have fallen. He has executed his task, in our opinion, very ably, though, if we might hint at a possible improvement, it would be the condensation of some parts in which the speculative and disquisitionary are indulged in, as we think, at rather too much length. The most effective portions of the work are those in which simple indicative description and narrative are adhered to, and particularly those in which the objects under the writer's notice are special or individual. The whole feeling of the book is poetical, and speaks in the most convincing terms of the amiable character of its author. Peculiar as his opinions in politics and religion notably are, we do not recollect a single passage of his volumes which has the least chance of offending those opposed to him.

Mr Howitt enters very heartily into the pleasures of farming life. The citizen's affairs, he says justly, are usually pent up in some little warehouse or shop, in which he remains the prisoner of Mammon. The farmer's concerns, on the other hand, however small, "spread themselves out in a pleasant amplitude both to his eye and heart." "Those are no artificial objects," he continues, "on which they expend their lives and souls; they are the delightful things of nature on which they operate; and nature operates with them in all their labours, and sweetens them to their spirits. This is the grand secret of their everlasting attachment to, and enjoyment of, agricultural life. They work with nature, and only modulate and benefit by her functions, as she takes up, quickens, and completes the work of their hands. There is a living principle in all their labours, which distinguishes them from most other trades. The earth gives its strength to the seed they throw into it—to the cattle that walk upon it. The winds blow, the waters run for them; the very frosts and snows of winter give salutary checks to the rankness of vegetation, and lighten the soil, and destroy what is noxious for them; and every principle of animal and vegetable existence and organisation co-operates to support and enrich them. There is a charm in this which must last, while the spirit of man feels the stirrings of the spirit and power of God around him. It may be said that rude farmers do not reason on these things in this manner. No, in many, too many instances I grant it; but they feel. There is scarcely any bosom so cloddish but feels more or less of this, and by no other cause can an explanation be given of the enthusiasm of farmers for their profession. It is not because they can sooner enrich themselves by it, that they are more independent in it—that they have greater social advantages in it. In all these particulars the balance is in favour of the active and enterprising tradesman; but it is this charm which has infused its sweetness into the bosoms of all rural people in all ages of the world. From the days of the patriarchs to the present, what expressions of delight the greatest minds have uttered on behalf of such a life!"

He proceeds to describe "the routine of one day of good fellowship, such as is seen in farm-houses where there is plenty, and yet no great pretence to gentility;" and a pleasant picture it certainly is, though not very reconcilable with the parliamentary condition of the agricultural interest.

A DAY OF MERRY-MAKING AT AN ENGLISH FARM-HOUSE.

"The farmer invites his friends to dine with him. He will have a party. Suppose it at some period of the year when he is least busy; for his engagements depending on the progress of the seasons, and his

* The Rural Life of England. By William Howitt 2 vols. London, Longman and Co.

whole wealth being at the mercy of the elements, he cannot postpone his duties, but must take them as they fall out. Suppose it then just before the commencement of hay-harvest, for then he has a short pause, between the putting in of his last crop of potatoes or corn, shutting up his fields, and clearing his green-corn lands, and that moment when the first scythe enters his hay-fields, when a course of arduous and anxious labours begins, that will not cease till all his crops are safely housed, hay, corn, beans, peas, and potatoes. Suppose at this pause in the growing time of summer, or after harvest, or amid the festive days of Christmas, he feels himself comparatively at leisure, in good spirits, and disposed to enjoy himself. He and his wife arrange their plans. Invitations are sent. On market-day he lays in all necessities—tea, coffee, prime cuts of beef and other meat; wine and spirits; sugar and spices. At home there is busy preparation. His garden is cleaned up: an operation of rare occurrence with a busy farmer, who thinks so much of his fields that he thinks but little of his garden. His stables and his rick-yard are put in order. The very manes and tails of his horses are trimmed, for all will have to pass under the critical notice of his friends, and he feels his professional character at stake. In the house there is equal activity. There is a world of cleaning and setting in order. Floors are scoured. The best carpets are put down. This room is found to want fresh staining; painting works doing here and there, both within and without. Trees also want nailing and trimming on the walls; and it is probable there may want some spout repairing, or tiles renewing, that have often been talked of, but never could have time found for their doing. The house and all about it look fifty per cent. the better. The neatly cleaned walks and closely mown grass-plots; the brightly-cleaned windows, and the scarlet curtains, and the purely white blinds seen within, give an air of completeness that is very satisfactory.

And then within begin the mighty preparations for the feast. Geese, turkeys, ducks and fowls, are killed and plucked, and part are cooked, and part are made ready for cooking. If the farmer shoots, and it be the season, there are hares and rabbits, pheasants and partridges, brought to the larder; if he do not, he makes friends with the keeper, who occasionally takes a social pipe and glass with him; or he makes a direct request to his landlord for this indulgence. Hams are boiled; pies are made; puddings of the richest composition are put together. If it be Christmas, loud is the chopping of meat for minced-pies; busy the mixing of spices; and the washing and picking of currants and raisins; and pork-pies and sausages of most savoury and approved manipulation are raised into material existence. If the sucking-pig escapes whipping—and we hope no honest farmer is now cruel enough for this operation—creams and syllabubs do not; they are whipped, not to death, but into life. There are blanc-mange and jellies, crystalline and fragrant; clouted creams, and cream of strawberries, raspberries, and I know not what melting and delicious things. The good and skilful dame, and the no less skilful and comely daughters, if she have them, and they are grown up to years of discretion in these delicate and culinary arts—what is not their depth of occupation! What glowing looks are theirs; what speculations; what contrivances and anticipations! I would fain take an easy-chair in some cool corner of this milk-and-honey-flowing kitchen, and watch, all their sweet employment, and hear all their sweet words in a grateful silence. But they are far from the end of their labours. Nuts, walnuts, apples, and pears, and other fruit, according as the season may be, are produced from their stores, or from the sunny walls and trees, wiped from every trace of mould or dust from the store-room, and placed in their proper receivers of glass, or china, or possibly of plate. The discovery of the richest cheese in the whole cheese-room is to be made by tasting; butter is to be moulded in small cakes, and imprinted with patterns of the deepest and most elegant figure, and a thousand other things made, or done, of which the tasting were to be desired rather than the catalogue to be particularised.

And then comes the great day! The guests are invited to dinner; but they have been enjoined to come early, and they come early with a vengeance. They will not come as the guests of night-loving citizens and aristocrats come, at from six to nine in the evening;—no, at ten and eleven in the morning you shall see their faces, that never yet were ashamed of day-light, and that tell of fresh air and early hours. Then come rattling in, sundry vehicles with their cargoes of men and women; lively salutations are exchanged; the horses are led away to the stables, and the guests into the house to doff great-coats and cloaks, hats and bonnets, and sit down to lunch. And there it is ready set out. 'They'll want something after their drive,' says the host. 'To be sure,' says the hostess; and there is plenty in truth. A boiled ham; a neat's tongue; a piece of cold beef; fowls and beef-steak pie; tarts and bread, cheese and butter; coffee for the ladies, and fine old ale for the gentlemen.

'Now do help yourselves,' exclaims the host from one end of the table; 'I am sure you must be very hungry after such a ride.' 'I am sure you must indeed,' echoes the hostess from the other, while a dozen voices cry all at once, 'Oh, really I don't think I can touch a bit. We got breakfast the mo-

ment before we set off;' and all the time deep are the incisions made into the various viands; and plentifully heaped are plates; and bright liquor is poured into glasses, and a great deal of talk of this and that, and inquiries after this and that person go on; a hearty lunch is made, and the gentlemen are ready to set out and look about them. They are warned by the hostess to remember that dinner will be on table at one o'clock—'exactly at one!' and assuming hats and sticks, away they go.

While they perambulate the farm, and pass learned judgments on land, cattle, and crops, and make besides excursions into neighbouring lands, to some particular experiment in management, or extraordinary production of combined art and nature, our hostess shows her female friends her dairy, her cheese-room, her poultry-yard, and discussions as scientific are going on, on the best modes of fattening calves, rearing turkey broods, and on all the most approved manipulations of cheese and butter. The quantities produced from a certain number of cows are compared, and many wonders expressed that lands of apparent equality of richness should some yield little butter and much cheese, and others little cheese and much butter; facts well known to all such ladies, but not easy of explanation by heads that pretend to see farther into the heart of a difficulty than they do. A walk is probably proposed and undertaken through the garden and orchard, and flowers and fruits are descanted on; and all this time in the house, roasting, and boiling, and baking, are going on gloriously. Savoury steams are rolling about under the ceilings; busy damsels, with faces rosier than ever, are running to and fro on the floors; stable-boys are turned into knife-cleaners, and plough-lads into peelers of potatoes, and watchers of boiling pots, and turnspits.

The hour arrives; and a sound of loud voices somewhere at hand announces that our agricultural friends are returned punctually to their time, with many a joke on their fears of the ladies' tongues. Not that they seemed to want any dinner—no, they made such a lunch; but they had such a natural fear of being scolded. Well, here they all are; and here are the ladies all in full dress. Hands that have been handling prime stock, or rooting in the earth, or thrust into hay-ricks and corn-heaps, are washed, and down they sit to such a dinner as might satisfy a crew of shipwrecked men. There are seldom any of your 'wishy-washy soups,' except it be very cold weather, and seldom more than two courses; but then they are courses! All of the meat kind seems set on the table at once. Off go the covers, and what a perplexing but uncomestible variety! Such pieces of roast beef, veal, and lamb; such hams, and turkeys, and geese; such game, and pies of pigeons or other things equally good, with vegetables of all kinds in season—peas, potatoes, cauliflowers, kidney-beans, lettuces, and whatever the season can produce. The most potent of ale and porter, the most crystalline and cool water, are freely supplied, and wine for those that will. When these things have had ample respect paid to them, they vanish, and the table is covered with plum-puddings and fruit tarts, cheesecakes, syllabubs, and all the nicknackery of whipped creams and jellies that female invention can produce. And then, a dessert of equal profusion. Why should we tantalise ourselves with the vision of all those nuts, walnuts, almonds, raisins, fruits, and confections? Enough that they are there; that the wine circulates—foreign and English—port and sherry—gooseberry and damson—malt and birch—elderflower and cowslip,—and loud is the clamour of voices male and female. If there be not quite so much refinement of tone and manner, quite so much fastidiousness of phrase and action, as in some other places, there is at least more hearty laughter, more natural jocularity, and many a

Random shot of country wit.

as Burns calls it. A vast of talk there is of all the country round; every strange circumstance; every incident and change of condition, and new alliance amongst their mutual friends and acquaintances, pass under review. The ladies withdraw, and the gentlemen draw together; spirits take place of wine, and pipes are lighted. We know what subjects will interest them—farming improvements and politics—and so it goes till tea-time.

When summoned to tea, there are additional faces. The pastor and his wife, perhaps a son and daughter, or daughters, are there; and there is the clerk too—the very model of respect and reverence towards his clerical superior. Whatever that learned authority asserts, this zealous and 'dearly-beloved Moses' testifies. He calls attention to what the vicar says; he repeats with great satisfaction his sayings. There, too, is the surgeon, and often the veterinary surgeon, especially as he also is often a farmer, and in intercourse with all the farmers far and near. This may seem an odd jumble of ranks, but it is no more odd than true. Who that has seen any thing of rural life has not seen odder medleys? Besides, money in all grades of society can do miracles. There are clergymen in many parishes who maintain their own ideas of dignity, and seldom move out of the circle of squires and dames; but there are others, and in perfectly rural districts there are abundance of others, that know how to mix more freely with the yeomanry of their flocks, and lose nothing neither. If they respect themselves, they insure the respect, and what is better, the attachment of their hearers.

But the vicar's presence on such a day is felt.

There is a more palpable approximation towards silence—a drawing tighter of the reins of conversational freedom. The great talkers of after-dinner are now become great listeners, and often on such occasions I have seen a scene worthy of the sound sense of English yeomen; for the pastor addresses his observations and inquiries now to this individual, and now to that; and now converses in a tone of pleasant humour with the ladies; so that you may often hear as sober discussions on the passing topics of the day, and on the prospects of the country, and especially of that part of it to which they belong, delivered in a homely manner perhaps, but with a discrimination and practical knowledge that are very gratifying. And on the part of the females, you shall see so many symptoms of good-heartedness and real matronly mind as make you feel that sense, soul, and true sympathies, are of no particular grade, or particular style of life.

But there must be a dance for the young, and there are cards for the more sedate; and then again, to a supper as profuse, with its hot game, and fowls, and fresh pastry, as if it had been the sole meal cooked in the house that day. The pastor and his company depart; the wine and spirits circulate; all begin to talk of parting, and are loth to part, till it grows late; and they have some of them six or seven miles to go, perhaps, on a pitch-dark night, through byways, and with roads not to be boasted of. All at once, however, up rise the men to go, for their wives, who asked, and looked with imploring eyes in vain, now show themselves cloaked and bonneted, and the carriages are heard with grinding wheels at the door. There is a boisterous shaking of hands, a score of invitations to come and do likewise, given to their entertainers, and they mount and away! When you see the blackness of the night, and consider that they have not eschewed good liquor, and perceive at what a rate they drive away, you expect nothing less than to hear the next day that they have dashed their vehicles to atoms against some post, or precipitated themselves into some quarry; but all is right. They best know their own capabilities, and are at home, safe and sound.

This may be considered as a sample of the domestic descriptions in Mr Howitt's book: it remains to present a specimen of those referring to natural scenes. Our space, however, being for the present exhausted, we must defer the pleasure of thus completing our notice of Mr Howitt's work to a subsequent number.

A HINT FOR PERSONS INTERESTED IN BANKING.

MR ROBERT BELL, accountant in the Edinburgh branch of the Western Bank of Scotland, has published, in the form of a small pamphlet, a letter on the Relative Merits of the English and Scotch Banking Systems, which we would recommend to the notice of all persons connected with banking in England, and to mercantile men in general in that part of the kingdom, as a most acute and sensible exposition of some peculiarities in the one system, which are eminently worthy of being copied in the other. Mr Bell adverts to the injury which the English joint-stock banks have sustained in consequence of endeavouring to do business on too small a capital, the greater profits in this case being more than counterbalanced by the want of public confidence; and he points out, for imitation, the plan followed in Scotland of securing confidence by large capital. This and other errors in the English system have been greatly aggravated, he says, by the want of mutual confidence among the various banking companies. Distrusting each other on the subject of over-issues, the banks of different provinces refuse each other's notes, and thus the notes of each bank enjoy currency only within a few miles around its seat. The chief object of his pamphlet is to point out the particular means by which the Scotch joint-stock banks attain confidence in each other, sufficient to entitle them to receive each other's notes. 'I allude,' says he, 'to the arrangement under which the exchanges of the notes of the different Scotch banks are managed, and their over-issues (wherever they have been made) returned upon them in a manner, and within a time so short, as to hold out very slender encouragement to that species of mismanagement. Indeed, by means of this expedient, any issue of notes which the resources of the particular bank cannot sustain, is rendered almost impracticable; and as I cannot help thinking that joint-stock bankers in England are not sufficiently alive to the practical advantages of this part of the Scotch system, I shall endeavour to explain, very briefly, how it is managed.'

The system of exchanges centres in Edinburgh. In that city a general exchange of the bank notes of all the banks of issue in Scotland, takes place twice a week. This exchange is made alternately within the office, and under the superintendence of the Bank of Scotland, and of the Royal Bank. On these exchange days, clerks from all the banks having establishments in Edinburgh, assemble, bringing with them the notes which each bank has collected, not only in Edinburgh, but, by means of their branches, all over the country; and as the Edinburgh banks act as agents for the

several provincial banks, and, as such, exchange or give value for their notes, the whole banking interest of Scotland, so far as concerns the exchange of notes, is represented in the 'Clearing-room.'

On these occasions a mutual exchange is made by the several clerks assembled giving the notes of other banks which they hold, and taking their own in exchange. After this exchange of notes, a balance is struck, and each clerk hands over to the officer of the presiding bank a statement, showing the amount of the balances as between his own bank and each of the other establishments. The aggregate balance on this statement shows the result of the day's exchange, as it affects each bank; and that balance will be for, or against, any given bank, in the precise proportion in which its recent transactions have exceeded or fallen short of its emerging and available resources.

The ultimate balance against every bank was formerly paid by a draft on London at ten days' date. But this mode of settlement having been found inconvenient, and having on one occasion led to considerable loss, in consequence of the failure of a private bank in Edinburgh, a different arrangement was then made, and is now acted upon. According to that arrangement, every Scotch bank of issue, having an establishment in Edinburgh, is bound to hold a certain *quota* of £1,000 exchequer bills. This *quota* is proportioned to the average circulation of the particular bank; and with these exchequer bills the balances of exchange are paid, the fractional parts of £1,000 being settled by £100 Bank of England notes, or gold.

As the object of this system is to oblige each bank to hold a certain amount of tangible government paper to meet any fluctuation and excess in its issues, the several banks are further bound, under the general exchange arrangement, to sell or to buy exchequer bills to or from each other, whenever the number of bills which any one bank holds exceeds one-third, or falls short in the same proportion, of the conventional *quota*. These purchases and sales of exchequer bills made from and to the banks reciprocally, are settled for by the bank making the purchase, by a draft on London at five days' date, with a commission equivalent to the eight days which the draft has to run at the exchequer bill rate of interest. In order to prevent the risk of these mutual sales and purchases of exchequer bills being converted into stock-jobbing transactions, the purchases are made at par, and each bank holds its *quota* in its own name, direct from government, while the general supply of exchequer bills is kept in the circle by being specially marked as 'Edinburgh Exchange Exchequer Bills.'

Still further to complete the control of the banking interests over these exchange arrangements, a statement is produced by each bank, on every exchange day, showing the amount of exchequer bills which it holds. And it is only necessary to add, that these exchange regulations, which have been found so salutary in practice, are the result of mutual and voluntary concert among all the banks; and although it may be said that they are not compulsory, yet in effect they are so, since any bank of issue refusing to accede to them would incur the risk of having its notes refused by the combined banks, which in Scotland would be tantamount to a suppression of the non-acceding bank as a bank of issue.

In addition to these exchanges in Edinburgh, there are also exchanges made on the same days in Glasgow; and the balances being advised by post to Edinburgh, are settled for next morning in the same manner, by exchequer bills and Bank of England notes. So also, in order to save the trouble and risk of transmitting to Edinburgh or to Glasgow, notes collected by the different agents in the country, wherever there are two or more branch-banks in the same town, their managers or agents exchange notes, and advise the state of balances to Edinburgh, when they are included in the next ensuing general exchange.

What I have now said may be sufficient, without going into further detail, to give a general idea of our system of exchanges. The Scotch banking interests have been mainly indebted, it is believed, for the complete organisation of this system, to Mr Blair, the treasurer of the Bank of Scotland, one of the most able of our Scotch bankers; and although in description it may appear complicated, nothing can be simpler or more satisfactory than its operation in practice; nor can any check be more efficacious. Legislative enactments might be evaded, or they might prove needlessly inquisitorial, or they might impose undue and impolitic restraints on the freedom of trade. But this system leaves the internal operations of each bank entirely uncontrolled, while at the same time any over-trading, or improvident issue, is immediately exposed and checked by its rivals in trade—truly by means of a great mercantile union amongst the traders themselves, for protecting the public, and giving that general stability and credit to the entire banking interest which, in Scotland at least, seems to be thought essential to the well-being and success of each individual establishment."

It has been observed by writers inimical to the Scotch banking system, that the practice of exchanging notes, as above detailed, may have a tendency to prevent any one bank from going beyond its means in its issues, but that it cannot prevent an over-issue in the aggregate. This seems an exceedingly just remark; nevertheless, as far as we may judge from the practical working of the system, the issues are preserved within bounds through all the ramifications of the

Scottish banking operations—it is at least certain that no mischief has ever resulted from the practice as it at present exists. Mr Bell does not notice another cause of confidence in the stability of the Scotch banks. It is this:—By the law of Scotland, a creditor can strip his debtor of every particle of his property, moveable and heritable, and incarcerate his person to boot, in liquidation of his claim. We have no such absurdity among us as a gentleman of landed property living in jail and defying his creditors. Further, we have that most admirable law of registration of rights of property. At an expense of a few shillings and a day's time in searching, any one may learn how a person stands in regard to his house and landed property—whether it is encumbered, or a wife infested in it, or there be any thing else affecting it. All this, along with a general cautiousness, and the limited scope to overtrading, tends to support the Scotch banks in the best possible credit.

"Doubtless (continues Mr Bell) there are obstacles to the establishment in England of such a system as we have in Scotland; and not the least formidable of these obstacles is the influence of the Bank of England, and the circumstance of the notes of that establishment being a legal tender. But still there appears to be a short-sighted jealousy among the provincial English banks, which it would be of the utmost consequence to counteract. How is it possible that your English joint-stock banks can secure the confidence of the public, while they betray such a want of confidence in each other? A system of exchanges, well arranged and based on the system which I have explained, might go far, I humbly think, to accomplish this desirable object, and to consolidate the joint-stock bank interest of England. Until some such arrangement is introduced, your currency cannot be maintained in a vigorous and healthy state; nor will the joint-stock banks derive the full profits from their circulation."

REAL HISTORY OF A SLAVE BOY.

It is a pleasant sight to behold the labour of cane-cutting, in the summer season, on the plantation fields of Antigua, one of the sweetest of all the fertile spots of earth in the Spanish main. So at least thought Mr Henry Paget, as he rode slowly behind the row of chattering negroes, male and female, busy at the task we have mentioned, on his aunt's estate, which the young gentleman had come all the way from England to visit, and in some respects to put in order. As he gazed on the scene before him, he almost felt sorry at the thought of his approaching departure, to rejoin his family in Britain. With their large cutting-bills in their hands, a long line of white-jacketed and white-wrapped blacks were lopping off the stalks of the sugar-canes, dividing them into several portions, and laying them down in regular heaps as they went along. Others, again, behind these cutters, were busy binding up the strewn canes into bundles. Here and there some female negro had her little chubby child tottering about her feet, or assisting her to arrange the canes into proper parcels. All these workers were stout, healthy, and particularly happy, if the ringing laughter they ever and anon set forth, while the white glancing teeth were seen through their wide-extended mouths, could be taken as indicating a state of happiness for the time. As Henry Paget gazed on the dusky labourers, a pleasing feeling sprung up in his mind, for he felt the consciousness that his own visit had conduced greatly to the comfort which he saw. And the negroes also were conscious of this, as any one might have learned, had he been near enough to hear the many "Bless him young massa's" that were addressed to the rider, sometimes loudly, and sometimes in the tones of half-unconscious ejaculation, from the mouths of both men and women in the band.

Mr Paget, after a time, left the scene, in order to take a ride along the borders of some of the neighbouring plantations. The day was hot, but the country being well wooded, he was shaded from the sun's heat in his progress, at one time by the drooping and feathery branches of the picturesque palm, and at another by the thick foliage of the lofty cabbage-tree. Of all the productions of these islands, this latter tree is perhaps the most extraordinary. Its long trunk, rising to the height of fifty feet without a branch, and its dense crest of broad leaves above, make it somewhat resemble the humble vegetable after which it is named; but the resemblance is more remarkable in another respect. On the very top of every cabbage-tree, and in the very centre of that top, there exists a heart—and only one heart—some foot or two in height and breadth, and bearing the strongest likeness, in appearance, taste, and smell, to the heart or pith of a common cabbage. But we must not digress too much upon natural objects, our business being to attend to what befell Mr Henry Paget in his ride. After he had wandered to a considerable distance from his own property, he

chanced, when on the outskirts of a plantation not known to him, to hear, as he thought, a woman's cries at no great distance from him. Cantering smartly in the direction of the sounds, he saw, after turning the corner of a clump of palms, not a woman, but a black boy crying bitterly under the lash of a grown-up negro, beside whom stood a white overseer. Moved at the sufferings of the child, who did not seem to be above seven or eight years old, Mr Paget rode up, and asked "what the boy had done." The overseer, who seemed to know the querist by sight, touched his cap, and replied, "The little rascal was running away, sir." "Why, a boy so young as this could not think of making his escape from his owners," said Mr Paget. "Oh, no! massa, no run way! berry bad him foot—lilly sore," cried the boy, fixing on Mr Paget a look of most pathetic and intelligent entreaty, such as Henry thought he had seldom seen on a face before, though the one before him was black as the raven's wing. The poor creature pointed, at the time he spoke, to his foot. "If your foot had been sore, you little scoundrel," exclaimed the surly overseer, "you could not have been here. Get home; put the lash to him, Mingo, and he'll go fast enough." Perceiving the boy to sink to the ground instead of running away, when the negro held up the lash, Mr Paget leapt from his horse, and asked them to desist for a moment. He then looked at the boy's foot, and found the ankle to be most severely swelled. On being asked, the poor little fellow told Mr Paget, that, his mother being "berry, berry sick" at home, he had run to the woods between work hours to gather some "yarb" that she wished, and that, in his haste, he had fallen and hurt his foot so much that he could not walk.

Mr Paget could not help feeling considerably interested in the case of the boy, partly from the filial tenderness which his mishap betrayed, and partly from his intelligent-looking countenance. He thought he had never seen a more pleasing physiognomy among the negro race. The overseer, meanwhile, was impatient. "You must not trust to all, sir," said he, "that these cunning imps say, simple as they seem." "I trust so much to what this boy says, sir," replied Mr Paget, "that I will buy him from you, if you have the power to dispose of him." "I have no such authority," said the man shortly. Henry then inquired who managed the estate, and found that a Mr Carr had the direction, in the absence of the proprietors, who had long been non-residents. Not to dwell unnecessarily on this matter, we may briefly state, that, before returning home, Mr Paget, impelled by a feeling of interest for which he could scarcely account, had seen this gentleman, and purchased the boy, who had, in the interval, been carried home by the negro attendant on the overseer. In a few days afterwards, the boy, having recovered from his sprain, was an inmate of his new master's house. He had wept at parting from his parents, but they shed no tears themselves, being too glad to see him removed from an estate on which, as experience had taught them, he would have been hardly used, probably through life. In his new place, the little African got the name of Caesar Paget, according to a custom often followed in the West Indies, of naming young slaves after their owners.

The negro boy thus accidentally rescued by Mr Paget—at the cost, it may be observed, of a very large sum—proved, as his purchaser had anticipated, to be gifted with uncommonly lively parts, and with great docility and affectionateness of disposition. So much, indeed, was Mr Paget struck with the promise of the lad, that, on setting out for England, a short time after the incident described, he took little Caesar with him. Several circumstances concurred in making this voyage across the Atlantic a most fortunate thing for the boy, not only in its ultimate, but in its immediate consequences. Having always, from his connection with a West Indian property, felt a strong interest in the question of the negro capabilities for intellectual culture, Mr Paget took a pleasure, while at sea, in promoting and watching the development of Caesar's mind, finding therein an excellent amusement for his unoccupied time. Very little instruction of any kind had been given to the boy before, but he rapidly profited by that which his kind master deigned to bestow on him, and thus solved for his teacher the problem of negro-improvability, which Lott Cary, Thomas Jenkins, and Phillis Wheatley, may have solved for others.

The facility with which the young African imbibed the common rudiments of education during the voyage, induced Mr Paget, on reaching his aunt's house in the west of England, to provide Caesar with continued opportunities of instruction. In short, Caesar, during several years succeeding his arrival at Pagetville, received a good ordinary education, such as is usually bestowed on the middle classes of Britain. It was not thrown away on a barren soil. The boy's intelligence and correctness of deportment soon made him very much a favourite with Mrs Paget, the lady of the house, and aunt of his benefactor. It would be superfluous, however, to dwell on this part of our hero's life. Suffice it to say, that, after he had passed the period of boyhood, he became the personal and favourite attendant of his mistress. Subsequently, he advanced in position, as opportunity occurred, until he became house-steward, and was entrusted with the highest charge connected with his lady's household affairs.

Shortly after he was made house-steward, his mistress removed to the neighbourhood of Henley, on the Thames, where she had a small estate, with a mansion attached to it. Here Caesar continued for several years in the management of the domestic matters of the family, and in the course of this occupation, became known to, and indeed familiarly acquainted with, many of the respectable tradesmen and merchants of the town of Henley. The consequence of this was seen in the course of time. Mrs Paget died. Her oldest nephew, a brother of Caesar's former friend, fell heir, though never the deceased's favourite, to her English property. Several years before this time, Henry Paget, being in bad health, had returned, for the advantage of warmer air, to the Paget estate in Antigua, which his aunt had latterly disposed to him, being all the landed property she had it in her power to bestow on the nephew she loved. In this situation of things, our friend Caesar received an invitation from the English heir to continue in his place as major-domo. But he declined the offer for several reasons, though undecided about any other course for the future. Several of his friends in Henley heard of this, and the result was, that a number of the respectable merchants of the place, knowing Caesar's probity and activity in business matters, strongly recommended him to take advantage of a favourable opening which then occurred, and to engage in trade in Henley. The opening in question was in the coal-trade, which is carried on extensively there. Caesar took the advice given to him, and became a coal-merchant in Henley.

His late lady had not forgotten in her will the valuable services of her attached African, and Caesar Paget, as we may now call him without fear of confusion, was therefore enabled to embark in business with a considerable capital. He had also the advantage of having a considerable range of acquaintance, and a good character. Some may perhaps think that he had disadvantages, or at least a disadvantage, to counterbalance the favourable points. But—whether from a particular liberality on the part of the people among whom he found himself placed, or not, we cannot say—certain it is, that Caesar not only was successful in business, but also in gaining the warm friendship of the most respectable of his fellow-townsmen. The colour of his skin became forgotten or unheeded; how completely, the following incident in his career will show. After our hero had spent a number of fortunate years in business, the chief rival he had in trade died, leaving a young and comely widow behind him. Caesar was at this time in the prime of confirmed manhood, with a tall, manly person, not inelegantly formed. His colour was, it is true, as black as ink, but his features were as near the European as the African contour. Thus fashioned, Caesar Paget determined to offer himself to the blooming widow, thinking no doubt that the junction of the two businesses would be a most excellent thing for all parties. The widow thought so too; or, it may be, Caesar had the address to persuade her of it. However this may be, she married our friend, and, we believe, never had occasion to repent of it, in the course of a long wedded life.

The tastes and manners, indeed, of Caesar Paget may be described, without exaggeration, as those of a cultivated English gentleman. He was a great reader, to use a common phrase, and attached, in particular, to dramatic literature, as also to theatrical amusements. In order to see a favourite actor in a favourite play of Shakspeare, he would sometimes proceed, expressly on purpose, to the metropolis, accompanied generally by some of his family. In all the cultivated and elegant amusements of Henley he took a prominent part. In the cricket clubs he was an active and cherished associate, and very odd, in truth, it was, to see him on the cricket field, "among the white ones, coloured only he." But his fellow-townsmen and cricketers seemed, as has been said, to have utterly forgotten, in the course of time, the existence of such a circumstance as his peculiarity of hue. From his speech, nothing could be detected to indicate him other than a well-educated native of the country in which he lived.

Thus, possessed of wealth and comfort, surrounded by a happy family, esteemed by friends and employers, and enjoying as well as appreciating all the elegant and refined pleasures of civilised life, did he, who was in youth a poor slave-boy of Antigua, spend his advanced years. What a change—what a revolution—in his existing circumstances and probable fate, was produced by that stumble amid the Antiguan palm-trees—which caused the sprain in the ankle—which caused him to be lashed—which caused him to cry—which caused Mr Henry Paget to come to the spot—which, finally, caused the liberation of the boy! These, at least, form the *climax* of circumstances by which the change was wrought out; but the true proximate cause of the whole was the filial affection implanted by the Creator in the boy's nature, which led him to risk the lash for the procuring of a little good to his poor mother. With this moral, the old story-books would certainly have concluded a history like this; and though they too often left out of account, in doing so, all the after-propriety of conduct necessary to consummate the good attained by the first act, yet, as the failing of the old narrators leaned to virtue's side, we are content that filial affection should be regarded as the origin of Caesar Paget's remarkable success in life. At the same time, we cannot help fearing that similar inlets to success have fallen in the way of many individuals, both white and black, without

proving of any permanent avail, because the persevering industry and activity were absent which were required to make "the thread into a tether." Caesar Paget possessed these qualities, and all who would imitate his course must imitate them.

BIOGRAPHIC SKETCHES.

JOHN RENNIE.

JOHN RENNIE, one of the most distinguished engineers that Britain has ever produced, was the youngest son of a respectable farmer at Phantassie, in the county of Haddington, where he was born on the 7th of June 1761. Before he had completed his sixth year, he had the misfortune to lose his father, but the loss was supplied by the attentive care of his elder brother and other surviving relatives. The neighbouring parish school of Prestonkirk was the scene of young Rennie's early education, which was confined to reading, writing, and the elements of arithmetic. But the opportunity of further instructions, of a kind well calculated to call forth and foster the peculiar talents of the future engineer, was not deficient, fortunately, in the neighbourhood of Phantassie. The ingenious inventor of the thrashing-machine, Andrew Meikle, had his workshop close by Mr Rennie's farm, and John was in the habit of frequently visiting this scene of skillful mechanism, than which nothing could be more congenial to his mind. In time he began to imitate at home the models of machinery which he saw there; and at the early age of ten, he had made the model of a windmill, a steam-engine, and a pile-engine, the last of which is said to have exhibited a degree of practical dexterity very wonderful at the modeller's age.

At twelve, Rennie left school, and became a pupil of Meikle, in whose employment he continued two years. He then went to Dunbar, where he spent other two years in improving his general education, and acquiring a knowledge of mathematics. So diligently and successfully did he pursue his studies at Dunbar, that his teacher there, on being called to a more lucrative situation, strongly recommended Rennie as a fit person to be his successor, though but sixteen years old at the time. Rennie, however, preferred to return to the workshop of Andrew Meikle. Here he continued another year or two, and made himself a good practical mill-wright. He also managed to spend a winter in Edinburgh, where he attended the lectures of Robison on natural philosophy, and of Black on chemistry. He thus qualified himself in some measure for the higher branches of engineering.

It was at first Rennie's intention to establish himself as a master mill-wright in his native country, and he did really erect, in this character, some four-mills near Dundee; but as he became conscious of his own expanding powers, higher views entered into his mind. Having procured a recommendatory letter from Dr Robison to Messrs Bolton and Watt, he went to England, and was immediately taken into the employment of these gentlemen, at their famous establishment at Soho, on a fixed salary of a guinea per week. About this period (1783), Mr Watt had just begun to apply the steam-engine to mill-work, and the Albion mills, at Blackfriars' Bridge, were projected. In the erection of these mills, begun soon after, Rennie was entrusted with the mill and grinding part, which he executed in such a manner as fully to satisfy Watt of the extraordinary talents of his young assistant. The Albion mills were on a vast scale, having twenty pairs of millstones, worked by two engines, each of fifty horse power. In 1791, two years after their completion, these mills were destroyed by wilful fire, being obnoxious to popular prejudices on the ground of their creating a monopoly.

The machinery of Whitbread's brewhouse was the next important labour in which Rennie engaged, and his rising reputation was greatly increased by his manner of executing it. He was now induced to commence business on his own account as an engineer and executive mill-wright, and from about the year 1794, up till the day of his death, he stood at the head of his profession in Britain. A long succession of magnificent works of utility justified his claims to this pre-eminence in place and fame. In truth, with every undertaking of magnitude in the country—canals, bridges, harbours, docks, or lighthouses—Rennie, through a quarter of a century, was connected. Among his principal bridges are those of Kelso, Leeds, Musselburgh, Newton-Stewart, Boston, and New Galloway. The first of these, which consists of a level road-way, resting upon five elliptical arches, has always been greatly admired, not only for mere architectural strength and beauty, but for a peculiar harmony in the design with the character of the surrounding scenery.

But the celebrity of Rennie as a bridge-builder has a far nobler foundation to rest upon than any of those works mentioned. The Waterloo Bridge across the Thames at London, of which he was the architect, would have been alone sufficient to stamp him as an engineer of the first order. This bridge, one of the grandest existing monuments of architectural skill, as well as of British enterprise, consists of nine equal arches, of one hundred and twenty-seven feet span; the

breadth between the parapets is forty-two feet, and the road-way is perfectly level. The aspect of the whole, forces on the mind an impression of indestructibility, while, at the same time, the chaste simplicity of the design excites the beholder's admiration. The Southwark cast-iron bridge was also formed from a design by Mr Rennie, and subsequently the new London Bridge, which last, however, was not erected in his own lifetime. Many able architects expressed fears for the stability of the Southwark Bridge, but these have fortunately proved incorrect. Mr Rennie planned several other cast-iron bridges of large extent and importance.

In those public works which fall more immediately within the professional scope of a civil engineer, Mr Rennie was not less successful than in his purely architectural labours. The Aberdeen Canal, the Great Western, the Kennet and Avon, the Portsmouth, the Birmingham, and the Worcester canals, are the most important of the works of this nature which he executed. By him were erected the docks of Hull, Leith, Greenock, Liverpool, and Dublin, besides the West India Docks at London; and to him the public owed the modern harbours of Berwick, Dunleary, Howth, Newhaven, and Queensferry. He was instrumental also in effecting great improvements on the national dock-yards at Portsmouth, Chatham, and other places, and the new naval arsenal at Pembroke was constructed from his designs. Mr Rennie likewise furnished the plan of the Bell-Rock Lighthouse, which plan Mr Stevenson executed. But the greatest of all his naval works, and, perhaps, of all his works taken together, was the celebrated mole or embankment called the Breakwater of Plymouth. This structure, which is just a huge pier of rude construction and peculiar form, and which gave convenience and security to one of the most important harbours of Britain, is of a magnitude so stupendous as to be still the object of continual wonder, even to the boldest and most skillful engineers in the world. After it was begun by Rennie, additions to the embankment were made incessantly for many years, and the enormous size of the whole structure may be conceived from the fact, that one million eight hundred thousand tons of stone had been deposited previously to the year 1823. The experience of many years has confirmed the expectations formed from the breakwater. It has given shelter to shipping in the most violent hurricanes, while vessels, anchored in a part unsheltered by it, have been utterly destroyed.

Such are but a few of Rennie's principal labours. With lesser works, to the execution of which he only in part gave his assistance, the whole United Kingdom is covered. It has been calculated that he planned in all works to the amount of fifty millions sterling, of which nearly twenty millions were expended under his own superintendence. Mr Rennie's enthusiasm in pursuit of his profession was without a limit; so much so, that on going to France for a short time in 1816, he declared it to be the first relaxation he had taken for nearly thirty years. His habits of business were most laborious; he frequently made appointments at five o'clock in the morning, and continued incessantly occupied till a late hour of the evening. Order, regularity, and real business, were alike his maxims and his practice. This was the line of conduct, which enabled Mr Rennie, with the aid of the powerful talents which nature had bestowed upon him, to rise from the condition of an operative mill-wright to the possession of a handsome fortune, and to the enjoyment of his country's lasting esteem and admiration.

"The great merit (says the Scottish Biographical Dictionary) of Mr Rennie as an engineer, is allowed to have been his almost intuitive perception of what was necessary for certain assigned purposes. With little theoretical knowledge, he had so closely studied the actual forms of the works of his predecessors, that he could at length trust in a great measure to a kind of tact which he possessed in his own mind, and which could scarcely have been communicated. He had the art of applying to every situation where he was called to act professionally, the precise form of remedy required for the existing evil—whether it was to stop the violence of the most boisterous sea—to make new harbours, or to render those safe which were before dangerous and inaccessible—to redeem districts of fruitful land from the encroachments of the ocean, or to deliver them from the pestilence of stagnant marsh—to level hills, or to tie them together by aqueducts or arches, or, by embankment, to raise the valley between them—to make bridges that for beauty surpass all others, and, for strength, seem destined to last to the latest posterity: in all these tasks Rennie had no rival. Though he carried the desire of durability almost to a fault, and thus occasioned more expense, perhaps, than other engineers would have considered strictly necessary, he was admired as much for his conscientiousness in the fulfilment of his labours, as for his genius in their contrivance. He would suffer no subterfuge for real strength to be resorted to by the contractors who undertook to execute his plans. Elevated by his genius above mean and immediate considerations, he felt in all his proceedings as if he were in the court of posterity; he sought not only to satisfy his employers, but all future generations." Though the *practical* was Mr Rennie's glorious forte, he was nevertheless partial to those mixed investigations where experiment and theory are combined. But his inquiries of this nature were never given to the world; he never contributed

to the transactions of the learned societies, and, indeed, left no record, we believe, of his talents as an author. One proof, however, of the valuable character of his scientific meditations exists. His instrument for ascertaining the strength of flowing water was a contribution to science of no small importance.

Mr Rennie's person was large, tall, and commanding; his features also were massive, but wore an expression of mildness perfectly in unison with his gentle and cheerful disposition. He married in early life a Miss Mackintosh, who brought him a family of nine children. At his death, which occurred on the 16th of October 1821, six of these children survived him. Mr Rennie's death was felt by his countrymen as a national loss, and he was buried with great funeral honours in St Paul's Cathedral, near the grave of Sir Christopher Wren. Keeping in view the amount and incalculable utility of his labours, to whom can we point, in all the rolls of eminent men, to whom Britain has given birth, and say that *this* man has deserved better of his country than John Rennie? His sons have followed worthily in the footsteps of their father, and bid fair to leave behind them a scarcely less honourable name.

STATISTICAL ACCOUNT—AYR.

The number recently published of this work breaks ground in the extensive and important county of Ayr, of which a map is prefixed. It opens with a long and able article on the parish of Ayr, written, we understand, by Mr Cuthill, the junior minister.

A remarkable instance of improvement and advance of value in land is presented by the classic piece of ground which once formed the parish of Alloway. When, about the end of the seventeenth century, this parish was united to that of Ayr, "it was almost entirely covered with furze and heath, without shelter or ornament of any kind, except some natural wood along the bank of the river. It is on record that the lands were possessed by tenants at the yearly rent of 1s. 3d. per acre, which they were unable to pay, so that they often became bankrupts and beggars. At present a great part of it is among the most fertile, the best cultivated, and the most finely wooded districts in the county, the land yielding a rent of upwards of 1.4 per acre, and producing in crops a fair remunerating return to the farmer."

The town of Ayr is described as being now the seat of about 17,000 of population, when its adjuncts are included. Twenty years ago, it was ill paved, ill cleaned, ill lighted: now it is well paved, well cleaned, and well lighted, while the general elegance has been increased by the removal of several wretched old buildings, and the erection of several new streets. The town is more remarkable as the seat of a genteel idle population, such as often clusters in county towns, than as a seat of industry in any of its larger and more conspicuous forms. The lower population is described as having been of late years greatly vitiated by the immigration of poor Irish—in which respect it is not worse off than many other parts of the world. What follows is worthy of attention:—"There are few places where the poor are better attended to and provided for than in Ayr, and they know this full well. Practical benevolence to the needy and distressed is a leading characteristic of the inhabitants, and one of the fruits of this has been, that numerous charitable bequests, mortifications, and institutions, exist for mitigating or removing in one shape or other the evils of poverty. These, however, have in some respects had an opposite effect from that designed, as they have tended to increase the number of applicants and expectants, and to induce the needy to seek to establish a legal residence in the parish solely on their account. The management of the poor's funds also, being under so numerous a body of directors, has probably had the effect of creating in the community a more general interest in favour of the poor, than in most other places, and of obtaining for them a higher rate of alimony than they generally receive in any of the parishes around. Many of these directors are fluctuating; they are apt to be guided more by impulses than by general rules; and hence applications for alimony are decided on more by feeling, in some cases, than by expediency. Add to all this, that there is hardly a family in the higher or middle classes of society, that have not their set of dependents or hangers-on for private bounty, that partake of what they can spare to relieve their wants and render them comfortable, and whom they are always earnest to recommend to public charities. Now, all this exhibits both an amiable and a Christian spirit; but the consequence of it has been, that one out of every twenty-three of the population is a pauper, whereas in Glasgow, the proportion is one in every forty. It must be perfectly obvious, therefore, that such a state of things must have a tendency to deteriorate the civil and moral condition of the lower orders, by breaking down their feelings of independence, and thus by making them respect themselves less, rendering them less respectable in the eyes of others."

Newton-upon-Ayr is the Southwark of Ayr: in this parish, which, in 1831, contained 1927 males and 2093 females, it is stated that no fewer than 600 or 700 women, chiefly young and unmarried, are employed in hand-sewing for warehouses in Glasgow. "The Ayrshire needle-work, so extensively known and

justly celebrated, was executed in this parish forty years ago, and it has been gradually improving until the present day. It consists of various patterns sewed on muslin and cambric for ladies' dresses, babies' robes, caps, &c. From the year 1815, when *point* was introduced into the work, the demand for it in London and other parts of England, as well as in Dublin and Edinburgh, has increased to a considerable extent. It is also sent to France, Russia, and Germany, and is exposed to sale in the shops of Paris. This valuable means of employment affords a fair profit to the manufacturer, and gives support to many respectable females, who, by dint of industry, can earn from 1s. to 1s. 6d., and, in some cases, 2s. per day. In this work, which is confined to Ayr and its neighbourhood, several hundreds are engaged; and it is calculated that at least from 50 to 60 of them, who are chiefly young women, reside in the parish of Newton."

PROPOSED PLAN FOR THE EXTERMINATION OF EPIDEMICAL FEVER.

In last number of the Journal we presented an exposition of the nature and causes of epidemical diseases, as far as the atmosphere is concerned, with a plan which has been proposed for purifying the air in order to avert contagion. We now lay before our readers an exposition, the object of which is to prove that deficiency of diet is another leading cause of the propagation of contagious disease. The article appeared for the first time a few weeks ago in the *Scots Times*, a Glasgow newspaper. We do not doubt that the theory it describes is a truth, though not the whole truth:—

Dr Hannay, in his Lectures on the Practice of Physic, in Anderson's University, adduces very plausible arguments to show that the epidemic typhus of the great towns in the United Kingdom, now prevailing to such an alarming extent in Glasgow, is entirely owing to the want of animal food as an article of regular diet. Most writers insist on the want of pure air and the want of cleanliness as the most common causes of fever; and though many of them also mention want of food, they do not in sufficiently distinct and pointed terms direct attention to the fact, that it is because the poorer classes do not enjoy a regular meal of animal food, at least once a-day, that typhus has committed such fatal ravages among them. During the epidemics of 1816, 17, and 18, the doctor states that out of fifty-nine cases of fever which came under his care, there was not one of the patients who was in the habit of dieting at any time on animal food. Fevers break out in the best ventilated houses and situations. This Dr Hannay well exemplified in the case of a village in the south of Scotland, where fever broke out and destroyed a great many of the inhabitants, who (be it remarked) were most cleanly in their habits, and lived in houses as well ventilated as any in the kingdom, but they fed almost entirely on fish, and seldom partook of animal food. To prove the position he contends for, the doctor adduces the frequency of typhus in the east end of the city, compared with that in the west end, and shows that its melancholy prevalence in the former is owing to the poorer inhabitants not obtaining their meals of animal food with the same regularity as the wealthier inhabitants of the west end. That it cannot be a want of cleanliness alone that causes fever, is demonstrated by the number of young persons working in factories who fall victims to this malady, and whose habits are as cleanly as those of many living on better fare. Dr Hannay maintains that his views are supported by the much less frequent occurrence of fever in the English towns, where they live more on animal food. In Liverpool he found less fever prevailing than in Glasgow, and there more animal food is consumed than in Glasgow. Besides, a great majority of those cases occurring in Liverpool were found among the poorer Irish and Scotch inhabitants, who were for the most part living on the meagre fare peculiar to their national habits. In Manchester, where still fewer of the working-classes live on vegetable diet, there is much less fever. In Leeds, where the population is nearly all English, and so live on fresh animal food, there is not one case of fever for twenty occurring in Glasgow. The doctor then devises a scheme for eradicating this destructive and expensive plague, in which it is proposed that the working classes be instructed in the important truth that immunity from fever may be enjoyed by a regular and moderate use of animal food. That while they be counselled to observe habits of cleanliness, and directed to pay proper attention to the ventilation of their houses, they at the same time be told to eat a little animal food daily, which it will be of the last importance to impress upon them, as the best preventive of fever; and with the appalling lessons of death in every lane and alley of our city, a ready ear would surely be given to our advice. That the district surgeons, in their highly useful visitations amongst the poorer people of the town, should strongly enforce this truth upon their attention—that the clergy-men, city missionaries, elders, &c., should also, in their benevolent visits, corroborate the wholesome fact; and if all their efforts, by instruction and persuasion, were found insufficient, that then a society ought to be formed to see the practice carried into effect. Some may suppose that want of money will be the great objection to this scheme. But surely, when a labouring man is made to understand that the daily consumption of a little animal food will go far to preserve him from fever and other diseases, he will make an effort to spare at least one shilling per week to secure this important end. More than double that amount is spent weekly by many of the working classes in the most injurious indulgences; such as spirit-drinking, which to a fearful extent predisposes its victim to fever. We have not done justice to the doctor's remarks, and we are obliged to omit other parts of his plan for ridding the community of this raging pestilence, such as the interference of government, and the establishment of societies for the preservation of the people's health, by

having them properly fed; all which might be done for much less than the sum now expended in fever hospitals, and in providing for the widows and orphans of those who die in these institutions. The subject is a most important one, and well worthy of public attention.

IMPROVEMENT IN GAS-LIGHTING.

By an official report recently presented to the Société d'Encouragement pour l'Industrie Nationale, at Paris, it appears that a discovery has been made by a French gentleman, M. Chaussonot, which, apart from its value, as corroborating the hypothesis of Sir H. Davy and other philosophers, with respect to incandescent bodies in a state of combustion, promises to be of considerable importance to the makers and consumers of gas for illuminative purposes. A series of delicate experiments had elicited this law—that the maximum intensity of light takes place at the moment the solid particles of carbonaceous matter are just on the point of escaping combustion, and when, also, the admitted air approaches the strict limit of usefulness. But to obtain this maximum, it was necessary that two important conditions should be united, namely, a more elevated temperature among the particles of carbonaceous matter, and a sufficiently large volume of flame. This remarkable result, after long baffling the attempts of experimenters, has at length been accomplished by the contrivance of M. Chaussonot, which was submitted to the society, and especially investigated by a committee appointed for that purpose. Like most important inventions, simplicity is its striking feature. It consists of a double envelope of glass, so contrived as to surround the flame, and to raise to a very high temperature the air by which combustion is to be supported. Some idea may be formed of this contrivance by supposing a common gas burner, with its glass chimney, encircled by an exterior cylinder of glass, the upper edge of which shall stand below that of the chimney by a distance of three or four inches, and the lower edge fitted into a metal cup screwed between the pillar and the burner. If the gas be now lighted in the usual manner, it is plain that the supply of air to the flame can only gain access to it by passing down the space between the two glasses (about three-eighths of an inch), and so upwards through the interior of the inner one; and as in its passage the heat of the flame elevates it to a very high temperature before it can arrive at the point where combustion is effected, the desired object becomes fully attained, namely, of feeding the flame with hot air instead of cold, and thus raising the light-giving particles of carbonaceous matter to the necessary degree of heat for producing the maximum intensity of illuminative flame. By this simple means, merely, it has been found that a given amount of light is to be obtained at an expenditure of gas nearly one-third less in quantity than what would be required to produce it by the best modifications of the old burners at present in use. The report of the French committee states the saving at 33 per cent.—*Newspaper paragraph.*

We recommend the above to the attention of brass-founders, gas-fitters, and others. Any person in these professions who is most active in bringing the improvement into practical operation, will be certain to be well supported by the public. At the same time, we take leave to suggest that possibly the lamp-glasses in common use will be found to be incapable of enduring the increased heat of the new burners. At present, the lamp glasses are execrable, and are a continual source of annoyance.

THE GOLD FISH.

This fish breeds freely in small ponds, and even in tanks, in this country; but particularly so, if, by any means, the temperature of the water can be maintained at an elevation above the ordinary mean. It is well known, that in manufacturing districts, where there is an inadequate supply of cold water for the condensation of the steam employed in the engines, recourse is had to what are called engine-dams, or ponds, into which the water from the steam-engine is thrown for the purpose of being cooled. In these dams, the average temperature of which is about eighty degrees, it is common to keep gold fish; and it is a notorious fact, that they multiply in these situations much more rapidly than in ponds of lower temperature, exposed to the variations of the climate. Three pair of this species were put into one of these dams, where they increased so rapidly, that, at the end of three years, their progeny, which were accidentally poisoned by verdigris mixed with the refuse tallow from the engine, were taken out by wheelbarrowfuls. Gold fish are by no means useless inhabitants of these dams; they consume the refuse grease, which would otherwise impede the cooling of the water by accumulating on its surface.—*Farrel's British Fishes.* [Here we see the universal law at work, that, for the multiplication of any species, the species must be in circumstances suited to its nature.]

SWIFTNESS OF BIRDS.

A German paper, speaking of the swiftness of various birds, says, "A vulture can fly at the rate of 150 miles an hour. Observations made on the coast of Labrador convinced Major Cartwright that wild geese could travel at the rate of 90 miles an hour. The common crow can fly 25 miles, and swallows, according to Spallangian, 92 miles an hour. It is said that a falcon was discovered at Malta 24 hours after the departure of Henri IV. from Fontainebleau. If true, this bird must have flown for 24 hours at the rate of 57 miles an hour, not allowing him to rest a moment during the whole time."—*Newspaper paragraph.*

HOW TO BOTHER THE BUGS.

An Armenian, a clever, good-tempered fellow, who had known better days, thus described an ingenious contrivance by which he avoided the vermin that abounded at Ortaoken. "I take care to examine and clean a large wooden table; on it I lay my mattress, and then I put the four legs of the table each into a pan of water on the floor; I am thus insulated—the bugs can't very well cross the water!" "And do you escape their invasion?" "Yes; all but that of a few bugs that may drop from the rafters and ceilings of the old house!"—*Newspaper paragraph.*

AMERICAN HUMOUR.

THE newspapers of Great Britain from time to time present specimens of American humour, which they extract from the columns of their Transatlantic brethren; and we must confess that we are of the number—we care not whether it be majority or minority—who enjoy these good things. There is a sharpness in American wit, characteristic of that keen and shrewd people, and also an extravagance or Munchausenism exactly such as might be expected in a country which abounds in all kinds of wonders, moral and physical. Even in the coining of particular words, one can recognise the ready mind of the people—how happy, for instance, “the non-consumption of dutiables.” No circumlocution in America—the people have not time for it. “They are born in a hurry,” they say, “and educated at top speed—make a fortune with a wave of the hand, and lose it in like manner, to remake and relapse it in the twinkling of an eye. Their bodies are locomotives, travelling at ten leagues an hour; their spirit a high-pressure engine; their life resembles a shooting star, and death surprises them like an electric shock.” Then there is a boastfulness, or, as a Scotchman would call it, *caspieness*, characteristic of a people generally prosperous, and who have no “orders” to bring their feelings of reverence into more than due activity. Only think of a jailor thus advertising:—

“The subscriber, keeper of Monmouth county prison (New Jersey), takes this method of informing the citizens of the county, that, as the various apartments of the prison are now tenanted (except the one in which Taylor is confined), he should be happy to receive any number of boarders who can come well recommended. Persons coming must be particular in getting their recommendations from responsible persons, as none others will do. His rooms and accommodations are as good as the county can afford under the present state of the experiment. His fare is well adapted to debilitated persons, and such others as can live on low diet, as the present state of the times will not allow of luxuries or high living. Beans, pork, and potatoes, will, however, be served up occasionally.”

JESSE COWDRICE, Jailor.

There is much of the Irish quickness of mind in the American, and not a little of that peculiarity which attaches to the numberless stories of Gascons in the French jest-books. The latter character, however, is not, as in France, confined to a provincial population.

We say these words, in light humour, as a sort of introduction to the following specimens of American drollery, most of which have been collected to our hands in a small pamphlet issued from the office of the Dundee Advertiser:—

“A RAT, A RAT!”—The Providence Gazette states as a fact, that a rat caught in a trap in that city actually *crept out of his skin to liberate himself!* It appears, says the American editor, that the animal was caught by the forehead, and that having eaten off his forehead, he crawled entirely out of his skin, leaving the flesh side of the skin outward.

HOW TO DAFFLE A HORSE.—Take in the spring the large buds of young oak trees, mix them with the horse’s provender, and give it him three or four times to eat, and he will be dappled, and continue so for a whole year! The buds of young elms will have the same effect.

ANECDOTE.—The following whimsical circumstance and peculiar coincidence, it is said, actually took place some time since:—A boat ascending the Ohio river was hailed by another boat, when the following conversation ensued:—“What boat is that?” “The *Cherry-stone*.” “Where came you from?” “From *Red-stone*.” “Where are you bound to?” “*Lime-stone*.” “Who is your captain?” “*Thomas Stone*.” “What are you loaded with?” “*Mill-stones and grind-stones*.” “You are a *hard set* to be sure; take care you don’t go to the bottom—*Farewell*!”

ABSENCE OF MIND.—A man thinking he was at home, a few evenings since, laid [lay] down on the common, and put his boots outside the gate, to be blackened in the morning. Another person, after getting home one rainy night, put his umbrella in bed, and leaned up in the corner himself.—*Boston Post*.

UNDERBIDDING.—A Frenchman assured one of our friends, that his countrymen never buy an article at the seller’s first price. “For instance,” said he, “one of them came into my store the other day, and priced a pair of silver buckles. I asked seven dollars. ‘Eleven!’ I give you nine.” “Seven is the price, sir, not eleven.” “Seven! I give you five.”

GOOD WISHES.—An American paper thus addresses its readers on the commencement of the new year:—“We tender our patrons the usual compliments of the season, wishing them good fires without smoky chimneys, sleigh rides without overturning, warm garments without empty pockets, arguments without anger, and plenty of good cider, and withal good memories, which will enable them to keep in mind the old adage, that ‘short settlements (particularly with the printer) make long friends.’ And to the ladies we wish more Chinchilla than Leghorn, more flannel than calico, more plaid than crape, more piety than prudery, more patience than petulance, more red cheeks than naked elbows; and, lastly, a complete victory over old bachelors.”

WONDERFUL PUMP.—It is said there is a pump on Long Island possessing the surprising power of converting one quart of milk into three pints! We don’t believe a word of it.—*Herald*.

AMERICAN SUPERSCRIPTIONS.—An article in a late British newspaper, says the National Gazette, quotes the following, copied in a post-office of one of the southern states, and challenges “any man to produce a greater curiosity of the kind in any language.”

“Mr Matthew F. Rainey, Alabama—Greene county. I am not sure it is Greene county—it is a French settlement, and not far from Tusculum and Matthew Gage, I believe; and not far from Dr Wyllys Pope, I expect.”

This is pleasant enough, but we have seen several curiosities of the kind not less so. The day before yesterday, we received from a northern state, a small pamphlet under envelope, with the *genuine* superscription, which we shall proceed to transcribe, suppressing only the name and residence of the writer:—“To the editor of the National Gazette, Philadelphia, in Pennsylvania—This with care and speed, and to the care of the Post Master and Divine Providence. This here package contains one little Hymn Book, Composed by the Will of God for the use of a Connexion of people called Christians, by — the author Who lives in — I hope that all the post-masters will let this go free to the Editor of the National Gazette, Philadelphia, for I would pay the postage if I had any money, and so may the grace of God be with you all Amen.”

ARGUMENTATIVE.—The Vermont Mercury has the following excellent defence lately made to an action by a down-east lawyer:—“There are three points in the cause, may it please your honour,” said the defendant’s counsel. “In the first place, we contend that the kettle was cracked when we borrowed it; secondly, that it was whole when we returned it; and, thirdly, that we never had it.”

A SLIGHT DIFFERENCE.—A St Louis paper says, that the anthracite coal found lately in Missouri looks like coal, feels like coal, and smells like coal—all the difference is, that coal burns, and that will not.

SECOND INSTANCE OF ABSENCE OF MIND.—The following instance exceeds even that of the attorney, who, in a fit of abstraction, paid his tradesman’s bill on first presentation:—“A correspondent apprises us of the decease of Mr Isaac Slocum, of S—, post-master of that place, formerly of Boston, in consequence of a severe cold. He was distinguished for his wondrous alienation of mind, which was a source of great annoyance to him. In addition to holding an egg in his hand and boiling his watch five minutes, and many others, the last instance known of his absence of mind is supposed to be the cause of his death. One night lately he retired to his chamber, and, after undressing, placed his pantaloons carefully between the sheets, and threw himself across the back of a chair, in which situation he was exposed during the night.”

THIRD INSTANCE.—A man in Lowell, in attempting to hang himself, forgot to put the rope round his neck, and jumped off the barrel into a mud hole. He did not discover his mistake until he attempted to kick.

AMERICAN SENATOR.—The author of the Americans as they Are, states that he found, in St Helena, in the United States, a newspaper published in Arkopolis, from which he extracted the following advertisement:—“Mr White respectfully begs leave to announce himself as candidate for their representative, &c.—N. B. Tailoring business done in the best manner, and at the shortest notice!”

COMBINATION.—A countryman drove his cart up to a grocer’s door, and asked him what he gave for eggs. “Only 17 cents,” was the reply, “for the grocers have had a meeting, and voted to give no more.” Again, the countryman came to market and asked the grocer what he gave for eggs. “Only 12 cents,” said the grocer, “for the grocers have had another meeting, and voted not to give any more.” A third time the countryman came and made the same inquiry, and the grocer replied that the grocers had held a meeting again, and voted to give only 10 cents. “Have you any for sale?” continued the grocer. “No,” says the countryman; “the hens have had a meeting too, and voted not to trouble themselves to lay eggs for 10 cents a dozen.”—*Boston Post*.

THREE REASONS FOR NOT LENDING.—“Hallo, Bill, lend us your penknife!” “I can’t—I haven’t got any! Besides, I want to use it myself.”

PHILOSOPHY.—Experimental philosophy—asking a man to lend you money. Moral philosophy—refusing to do it.

PET OYSTER.—Mr B—, of —, has in his possession an oyster, which is so tame that it follows him about the house like a dog.—*Kentucky Advertiser*.

SHINGLE MACHINE.—They have got a shingle machine in Mobile that only requires to be wound up “once in a while” to enable it to walk into the woods, provide itself with shingles, and completely cover the roof of a house in twenty-four hours.

KISSING IN AMERICA.—“When the down-east girls wish to threaten each other with a flogging, they say, ‘I will be into you like a thousand of brick.’ When a wild lark attempts to steal a kiss from a Nantucket girl, she says, ‘Come, sheer off, or I’ll split your mainsail with a typhoon.’ The Boston girls hold still until they are well kissed, when they flare up and say, ‘I think you ought to be ashamed.’”—*Boston Transcript*. When a young chap steals a kiss from an Alabama girl, she says, “I reckon it’s my time now,” and gives him a box on the ear that he don’t forget in a week.—*Irwinton Herald*. When a clever fellow steals a kiss from a Louisiana girl, she smiles, blushes deeply, and says—nothing. We think our girls have more taste and sense than those of down-east and Alabama. When a man is smart enough to steal the divine luxury from them, they are perfectly satisfied.—*Picayune*. When a female is here saluted with a buss, she puts on her bonnet and shawl, and answereth thus—“I am astonished at thy assurance, Jedediah; for this indignity I will see thee through.”—*Lynn Record*. The ladies in this village receive a salute with Christian meekness; they follow the Scripture rule—When smitten on the one cheek, they turn the other also.—*Bangtown Chronicle*.

DEFINITE INFORMATION.—“Well, Robert, how much did your pig weigh?” “It did not weigh as much as I expected, and I always thought it wouldn’t.”—*Detroit Spectator*.

NEW SOCIETY PROPOSED.—A wag suggests that the inhabitants of New York should lose no time in organising an Anti-leaving-little-fatherless-responsibilities-at-other-people’s-doors Society.

EDITORIAL PORTRAIT.—The following portrait of one of his contemporaries is drawn by the editor of the Louisville Journal. “He is, without exception, the most notorious liar in existence. He lies out of every pore in his skin. Whether he be sleeping or waking, on foot or on horseback, talking with his neighbours or writing for a newspaper, a multitudinous swarm of lies—visible, palpable, and tangible, are buzzing and settling around him, like flies around a horse in August.”

CAUSE AND EFFECT.—Many of the United States papers give, with every death they announce, the name of the physician who attended the defunct. The following specimen from a New Orleans journal will show the business-like manner in which the matter is gone about. “Died, at his house in Cotton Street, Jonathan Smith, store-keeper. He was a very well-doing citizen, and deservedly respected. His wife carries on the store. Gregson, physician.” The name of the doctor renders the affair complete.

THE MOON STOPPED.—A friend writes to us from St Charles, that since the inundation of Chauvin’s bottom, opposite to that place the mosquitoes have been so very thick, that the moon could not rise through them. We suppose this is the cause of the moon rising so late for some nights past.—*Booneville Herald*.

EITHER WAY WILL DO.—“Will you have me, Sarah?” said a young man to a modest girl. “No, John,” said she, “but you may have me if you will.”

LABOUR AND RECREATION.—It is said that in the town of Marblehead, the girls have made an improvement in ironing, which beats the steam-engine on common roads all hollow! They spread out all the clothes on a smooth platform, and fasten hot flat irons to their feet, and skate over them. This is combining the recreative with the useful and ornamental.

SPECIE IN THE WEST.—It is said that there is but one quarter of a dollar of change in Cincinnati, and that has been borrowed so often to pay postage, that it is worn down to a pistareen.

HARD TIMES.—The young ladies down east complain that the gentlemen are so poor there that they can’t even pay their addresses.

THE LOSS OF THE SALDANHA.

BY THOMAS SHERIDAN, ESQ.

[The Saldanha frigate, of thirty-eight guns, sailed from Loch Swilly, in the north of Ireland, on a cruise, November 30, 1811, and, encountering a dreadful gale, was four days after driven ashore, and wrecked on the rocks at the mouth of the bay or loch which she had recently left, when, of three hundred persons on board, not one escaped the raging elements. Some particulars of the sad calamity will be found in No. 173 of the present work. The following poem, remarkable for its bold sentiment and imagery, is reprinted from a commonplace book:—]

“Britannia rules the waves!”—
Heard’st thou that dreadful roar?
Hark! ’t is belowned from the caves,
Where Loch Swilly’s billow raves—
And three hundred British graves
Taint the shore.

No voice of life was there—
’Tis the dead that raise the cry!
The dead—who heard no prayer,
As they sank in wild despair—
Chant in scorn that hoarsest air,
Where they lie.

“Rule Britannia!” sang the crew,
When the stout Saldanha sailed,
And her colours, as they flew,
Flung the warrior-crow to view,
Which in battle to subdue
Never had failed.

Bright rose the laughing moon,
That morn that sealed her doom:
Dark and sad is her return,
And the storm-lights faintly burn
As they toss upon her stern,
’Mid the gloom.

From the lonely beacon height
As the watchmen gazed around,
They saw that flashing light
Drive swift athwart the night,
Yet the wind was fair and right
For the sound.

But no mortal power shall now
That crew and vessel save;
They are shrouded as they go
In a hurricane of snow,
And the track beneath her prow
Was her grave.

There are spirits of the deep,
Who, when the warrant’s given,
Rise raging from their sleep
On rock or mountain steep,
Or ’mid thunder-clouds that sweep
Through the heaven.

O’er Swilly’s rocks they roar,
Commissioned watch to keep;
Down, down, with thundering roar,
The exulting demons pour;
The Saldanha floats no more
On the deep!

The dread behest is past—
All is silent as the grave;
One shriek was first, and last,
Scarce a death-sob drunk the blast,
As sunk her towering mast
’Neath the wave.

“Britannia rules the waves!”
Oh! vain and impious boast;
Go, mark, presumptuous slaves,
Where Hs who sinks or saves,
Strews the sand with countless graves
Round your coast.

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